



Gulf Herb Society Coast Newsletter

December
2021

Mailing Only: 109 Grand Blvd • Mobile, AL 36607 • www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org

Rosemary for Remembrance DATES

- **January 25, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting at MBG
- **February 22, 5:30 pm.** GCHS Meeting at MBG
See calendar page at the end of the newsletter for complete details.

Thymely NOTES

[Click Here to find us on Facebook!](#) Read herb tips, recipes, and see pictures from our latest events.

- Please **volunteer** in the herb garden whenever you can. Contact Pat Ivie peivie@comcast.net, 334-315-5874 for info.
- A Membership form is at the end of the Newsletter. Mail to or drop off: c/o Kathy Lovitt, 109 Grand Blvd, Mobile, AL 36607. Make checks payable to GCHS \$25.00 Questions? Call Kathy Lovitt at 251-680-7979.

Did You KNOW

Learn About Invasive Herbs
gardeningknowhow.com

Some members of the herb family are known to become quite invasive when planted in and among other herbs in the garden. If left to their own devices, these herbs quickly will choke out their more docile garden companions and take over. Many of the invasive herbs are quite attractive and useful in the home garden, and as long as they are watched carefully, can coexist peacefully with their neighboring plants.

List of Highly Invasive Herbs

- All Mints, including Peppermint and Spearmint
- Pennyroyal, a member of the mint family
- Comfrey
- Bee Balm
- Lemon Balm

Invasive herbs can be kept in check very easily by keeping them in individual containers, or compartments, in the garden.

By keeping your invasive herbs separate, you not only keep them from choking out or taking over your other herbs and plants, but you'll be assured that each of your herbs keeps their individual and distinctive scent and flavor. When different types of mint are allowed

to mingle and roam freely among one another, you can wind up with them all tasting very much alike.

Even if you have a large yard or garden that allows you the space to plant invasive herbs directly into the garden, it is recommended that you plant different types of herbs at separate ends of your garden. Otherwise, your peppermints and spearmints will all become double-mint.



Orange Mint

Container Gardening Invasive Herbs

Container gardening for invasive herbs can be done one of two ways. You can plant individual herbs into individual containers and leave them above ground, or you can recess the containers into the ground. If you decide to recess your containers, it's best to use simple undecorated containers made of plastic, such as the ones you purchase plants and seedlings in. Don't recess the invasive herbs in the same container that you purchased them in though. Use a container that is a size or two larger to ensure that your plants have room to grow and mature.

To recess a container for invasive herbs, dig a hole large enough for the entire pot to fit into, leaving the lip (top portion) of the container sticking out approximately 1 or 2 inches (2.5-5 cm.). Be sure that your container has drainage holes. Fill the bottom of the container with gravel or Styrofoam pellets to allow proper drainage of the pot. Add potting soil and then plant your herb into the buried container. Your container-gardened herbs will need to be dug up every year or two and divided to keep them from becoming root bound.

Compartment Gardening Invasive Herbs

Compartment gardening can be done by placing borders around your invasive herbs that are planted directly into the garden.

You can create separate compartments for your invasive herbs using metal or plastic edging around them. The edging must be buried fairly deeply, to keep your herbs from spreading.

Why Some Herbs Become Invasive

Some herbs become invasive because they re-seed themselves very quickly and easily. Comfrey and lemon balm fall into this category. Check around these plants frequently to see if there are any unwanted baby seedlings growing around or beneath them.

Some herbs become invasive because they propagate themselves by way of rhizomes. A rhizome is a horizontal plant stem with shoots that grow above ground and roots growing below. These are also called rootstocks or creeping rootstalk. These runners are how the plant reproduces itself. All members of the mint family and bee balm reproduce this way. Always check around these plants in search of runners, which need to be removed quickly before they set roots.

With a little extra care, you will find that invasive herbs can be a welcome addition to your herb garden.

How to Flush out Garden Pests in Winter

growveg.com

Winter – and I mean a decent, cold winter with multiple frosts – can be actually be a boon to the gardener. The trick is to tame the cold and turn it to your advantage. One way to do this is to use it to flush out lurking insect pests. Expose them to the frosts, as well as a legion of hungry birds, and they'll have no chance! The combination of piercing cold and probing beaks will put a big dent in pest numbers, giving your plot a head start come spring.

Expose Grubs to Frost

One of the very simplest ways to quash overwintering bugs is to work out where they're hiding and bring them to the surface. The best way to do this at ground level, particularly around fruit trees and bushes, is to rake up and remove fallen leaves, before turning over the top few inches (5-10cm or so) of soil. Even simply tickling the soil surface with a border fork to ruffle up the leaf litter can bring hibernating grubs to the surface. In their state of torpor, they won't be going anywhere and the icy grasp of frosty nights can be left to do its work.

Where thick mulches cloak the ground around winter crops, start by peeling the mulch back. Rake it away during the coldest weeks of the year to allow the frost to penetrate the ground and cleanse the soil. Of course, you will probably want to keep some crops (for example parsnips and carrots) covered to facilitate lifting them out of the ground during iron-cold weather.

There's a balance to be found here – between slowly feeding the soil over the quieter months, and giving it a frosty 'deep clean' in time for the new growing season. A good compromise is to expose soil for three or four weeks over the coldest time of the year before covering it back over with mulch.

The Role of Birds in Pest Control

Tickling, turning and uncovering the soil also yields a veritable feast for insectivorous birds. In the deep of winter, when the ground is hard and there's little wild food, a bonanza of newly exposed fleshy grubs and bugs will help our feathered friends through a very hard time.

Additional feeding of birds will help keep them on side. Far from detracting their attentions from natural pest control, a well-stocked bird feeding station will draw in more wild visitors, making your garden a local hub. More birds in your garden mean more eyes and more beaks, which can only be a good thing for pest-weary gardeners!

Fruit cages are invaluable at protecting fruit bushes and small fruit trees from birds during the growing season. Winter is a good time to temporarily remove the netting to allow birds free access to the invertebrate snack bar. If you have chickens you can also allow them access. Their inquisitive beaks will turn over the soil surface to ruthlessly flush out and devour the lurking pests beneath.

One word of caution is required when removing netting from fruit cages. Sometimes birds such as bullfinches and tits will feed on young fruit buds, causing severe damage that necessitates pruning in order to encourage replacement shoots. So clearly a degree of monitoring is required, with netting replaced as soon as any damage is suspected.

Flush Out Pests With a Winter Wash

Winter washes are another weapon in the gardener's fight against insect pests. A winter wash is a fish or plant oil-based solution that's sprayed all over the exposed branches of fruit trees and bushes. The object? To kill overwintering pests, either on contact or through smothering and suffocation. Winter washes are effective against many types of mite and sap-sucking aphids. By controlling these insects the incidence of viruses is also greatly reduced – a double win!

Winter washes are sprayed on, often using a pump-up pressure sprayer, so you'll need to wait for a completely calm day before applying it (you don't want clouds of it to simply blow away). Try to get the best coverage you can, spraying the wash into every

nook and cranny. Smaller trees and shrubs are the easiest to cover, for obvious reasons. Larger trees can be tricky, but concentrating on those areas you are able to reach will still make inroads on pest numbers.

Clear Away Weeds

Weeds are another hideout for overwintering pests. It's good practice to remove weeds from your winter vegetable plot and from around fruit trees so that frost and prying beaks can get in and do their work.

Don't be too thorough, though. Many seedlings of biennial flowering plants such as calendula should be left to provide essential flowers to entice next season's beneficial bugs – the predators that will keep common pests in check once warmer weather returns. The same goes for ladybug and lacewing-friendly plants such as nettles. Concentrate on removing seedlings you know to be annual weeds, as well as maintaining your assault on pernicious perennial weeds such as bindweed and ground elder.

Removing habitats for overwintering pests, while at the same time actively going after them is a great way to wipe the slate clean for the new growing season. As you go about your pest purge, please remember to let us know what you find. You can report any bugs you see – including beneficial ones – at the Big Bug Hunt website. In doing so you will be part of a major citizen science project that we're coordinating. Its aim is to eventually develop an early warning system against pests, so a small investment

of time on your part could yield a massive impact on how we all deal with garden pests.

Gardening Tips for December almanac.com

- Test your garden soil for its pH levels. Contact your local Cooperative Extension office for a soil kit. Then, apply lime, sulfur, and fertilizer according to the soil-test results.
- Spread manure or compost over the garden and plow it under if you did not do so in the fall.
- Plant hardy vegetables and other cool-season crops, such as lettuce, cabbage, broccoli, beets, carrots, radishes, turnips, spinach, peas, and cauliflower.
- Start seeds of warm-season vegetables indoors.
- Make successive plantings of vegetables so that you have a continuous harvest throughout the growing season.
- Have beds ready for planting in early February.
- Plant cool-season annuals in the garden beds, such as carnations, pansies, petunias, and snapdragons.

Myrtle's MUSINGS

- We moved to a new apartment in Atlanta last month, and now we have a south-facing balcony garden with no tree cover. We can't wait for Spring!!!!

“DILL”-ICIOUS Chef John's Chocolate Mint Brownies ~ epicurious.com 6 to 8 servings

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cups sugar
- 3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1/4 teaspoon mint extract, or to taste

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Melt butter in a small saucepan over medium-low heat.
2. Combine sugar and cocoa powder in a large bowl; stir in melted butter until mixture is smooth.
3. Stir in 1 egg, vanilla, and salt. Mix in second egg.
4. Fold in flour and transfer to ungreased 8x8-inch square baking dish.
5. Bake in the preheated oven for about 35 minutes.
6. Remove from oven and cool in the baking dish for 10 minutes before removing to cool completely on a wire rack.
7. Mix powdered sugar, milk, and mint extract in a bowl until smooth.
8. Pour icing over cooled brownies. Spread evenly and allow to set, about 30 minutes. Slice into 16 brownies.

GCHS Officers 2021 – 2022

President ~ Beth Poates • President-Elect ~ Vacant • Recording Secretary ~ Larry Liles
Treasurer ~ Kathy Lovitt • Historian ~ Jennifer Williams • Ways & Means ~ Kathy Lovitt
Parliamentarian ~ Martha Fuller • Weeders & Planters ~ Sybil Burnett & Nita Crandall • Newsletter Editor ~ Ojuana Cooney

GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY Calendar of Activities 2021 – 2022

January 25th, 5:30pm: GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

February 22th, 5:30pm: GCHS Meeting at the Mobile Botanical Gardens

HERB DAY Postponed. Date to be determined.

NOTE: The above listed plans may change, or additional events and meetings may be added, so please check back frequently

MOBILE BOTANICAL GARDENS Calendar for 2021 – 2022

EVENTS/ SOCIAL (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

- **Georgia Roussos Catered Lunch.** Wednesdays and Fridays. 11:30am - 12:30pm. \$15
Boxed lunches with desserts may be purchased online and picked up curbside at the Gardens on Wednesdays and Fridays.

CLASSES (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

- **Yoga Class.** Monday and Thursday. 4:00pm - 5:00pm. \$10 – \$12.
Join Elise Saunders for an evening yoga class held in our Larkin Classroom! Classes offered Monday and Thursday evenings from 4:00pm -5:00pm Please note: Please bring your own mat and any props.

PRESENTATIONS (for more info [CLICK HERE!](#))

GCHS Food Team Duties

- Make sure kitchen tables and counters are clean
- No food left in fridge
- Pick any trash off floor
- Clean spills from floor
- Take out garbage & place new - bags in cans bags are on to fridge
- If table and chairs are to be put up we will let you know - if not they can be left out
- Make sure all doors are locked
- Thermostats must be left as you found them

Gulf Coast Herb Society Monthly Minutes

November 20, 2021 at The Mobile Botanical Gardens

President Beth Poates canceled the regularly scheduled meeting slated for November 23rd and rescheduled as a workshop day from noon until 2 PM on Saturday, November 20th, at the Gardens, in preparation for the Holiday Market.

Eight members were in attendance. Efforts were focused on creating tree decorations from clear glass ornaments which were filled with dried herbs, flowers, moss, bark and foliage. The final process was wrapping the ornament tops with jute and adding a jute bow. Nicole Owler made these ornaments for our last Market Day and provided guidance for the work team. Several members brought plentiful dried material.

Additional discussion was held on set-up and dismantling and volunteers for 10 hours of sales over the two days.

Time passed quickly and most of the ornaments were filled. Some were taken home to fill and most still needed the jute applied. The gift shop where we worked closed at 3 PM, so we could not finish up everything, but it was fun and a noteworthy effort. Clean-up was finished about 2:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted
Larry Liles

Submission by Larry Liles, Recording Secretary

At my first Herb Society meeting I mentioned one of my herbal interests was a discovery during my family genealogy research of a Surgeon's Chest being accompanied by a George Lisle on the Third Voyage of the Virginia Company in 1609. Lisle was on the lead ship which was blown away in a hurricane and crashed on Bermuda, where it was rebuilt and reached Virginia the next Spring, after a Jamestown winter called the "starving times." I, and many DNA cousins, are at a genealogy brick wall with five brothers born in the 1690s from the Tidewater area of Virginia. So, anything of earlier "Lisle" mentioning is of interest to us.

The contents of the chest were compiled by a Dr. John Woodall (1570-1643) who maintained until his death a monopoly on Ship Doctor's medicine chests for the East India Company and the British Navy. This chest appears to be his initial construction and everything in the chest was identified in Latin. I have more on his history, the prevailing Guilds of the time, this chest and its contents to discuss later.

For now, I would like to introduce you to another significant event that occurred in the mid-1600s. Mr. Nicholas Culpeper, (18 Oct 1616 - 10 Jan 1654) was sent by his family to Cambridge to study for the church. He failed miserably, which combined with a romantic misadventure, left him disinherited by his family. He did though, seem to acquire a good knowledge of Latin. He had developed some interest in the healing of the sick, so was fortunate to acquire an apprenticeship with an apothecary in London. Two additional influences occurred during this time. He gained herbal training with Thomas Johnson, editor of the 1633 edition of John Gerard's famous "Herbal" - published initially in 1597, and he studied astrology under the greatest English astrologer of the 17th Century, William Lilly, the author of "Christian Astrology", still in print today.

The knowledge of herbalism, along with astrology, were essential skills for a 17th Century healer. With a new wife, daughter of a wealthy merchant, he set up his practice in a poor section of London and saw up to 40 patients a day, many who could not pay him. This was in contrast to the physicians he distained, who attended just the wealthy. Culpeper fit the portrait of a contrarian.

When the Civil War broke out in 1642, he offered his services as both an officer and a healer. He sustained a bullet wound in his shoulder in 1643, that may have attributed to the tuberculosis that ended his life early, at age 38.

But the seminal event that influenced his life was the repeal of all censorship on printed material with the dismantling of the Star Chamber and Court of High Commissioners. He immediately went to work on a new career, and in 1649 published an English translation from Latin, of the Royal College of Physicians' "Pharmacopeia Londensis", exposing all the mystery veiled in the

medical use of Latin. He also included some of his own herbal opinions, which altogether, created havoc and rage in the College of Physicians, who had no recourse to this exposure. Two years later he published "Semelotica Uranica", aka "The Astrological Judgement of Disease", on the role of astrology in the development of ill health. Regarding this, Hippocrates of Kos, (460-370 BC), the famous Greek Physician, sometimes referred to as the Father of Medicine, and the source of the Hippocratic Oath, is quoted as saying: "A physician without a knowledge of astrology has no right to call himself a physician." The study of astrology was a very arduous task with a lot of math involved. This may seem odd to us now, but medicine from before Hippocrates to this time was dominated by the "humoral theory." Essentially that the body is composed of four fluids (humors) - black bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood - with illness and pain being the excess or deficiency of these humors. Methods were developed to moderate this bodily balance, one being blood-letting. The stars were believed to influence this balance, and even today, people check their daily horoscopes.

No one agrees on the cause of death of our first President George Washington. But his illness started after getting a sore throat out riding in the rain, and it probably was not helped with the blood-letting of some 80 ounces (2.365 liters, or 40% of his blood volume) over a 12-hour period. Such was the medical care of a very wealthy man in 1799. All this faded in the 1850s, with the rise of cellular and germ-based health care, leading to what we refer to as "modern medicine" today. This leaves to wonder what will be "modern" in medicine in another 200 years?

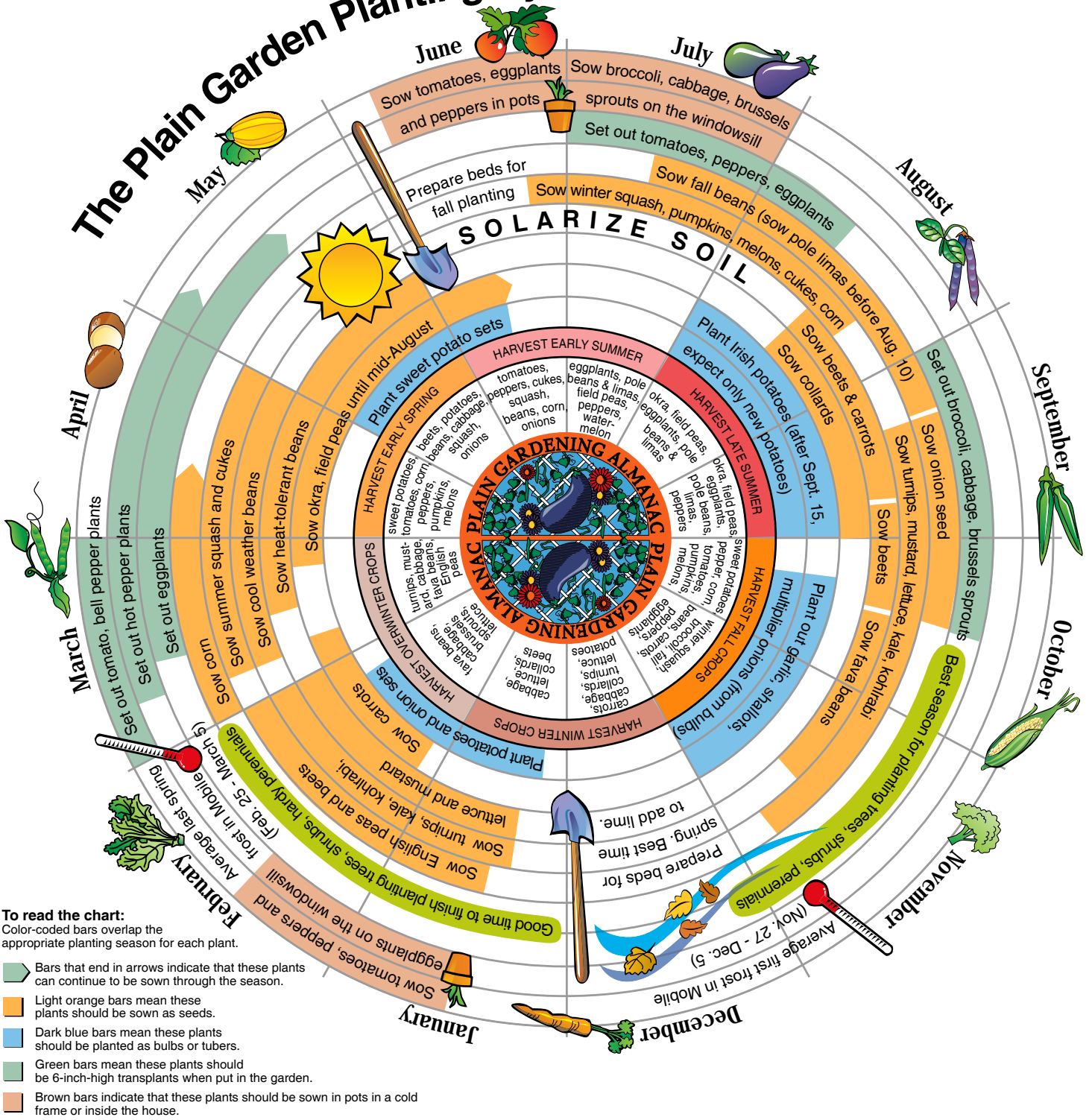
But I digress, back to Culpeper. He also published a "Directory for Midwives"; possibly motivated by the death of one of his seven children. Then on 05 September 1653, Culpeper completed his masterwork, "The English Physitian"; aka "Culpeper's Complete Herbal." He commented in a letter to his wife that this volume would be the source of his continuing fame, which has proven prophetic, as it has been in continuous publication ever since. His wife wrote of 79 translations or authored books left in Culpeper's estate. Only one was published posthumously, possibly because it addressed a dangerous subject for a living person, "Treatise of Aurum Potabile"; on the subject of alchemy and Culpeper's philosophical beliefs. Censorship returned in 1662 after the Restoration of the monarchy, and suppression was imposed on astrological texts and almanacs, but Culpeper had made the most of this opportunity, leaving us with a window into the 1600s.

I borrowed liberally from the Introduction by Diana Vowles in the 2018 edition by Arcturus Publishing Ltd pictured here, then added several personal insights. Hundreds of herbs are described in this text, often giving alternate names, the place and time to grow, and an interesting section called "Government and Virtues" which requires the understanding of the approach to medicine in Culpeper's time. It is still a fun review for anyone interested.

The book closes with a section that I copied here "Of the Gathering, Drying, and Preserving of Plants, Herbs and Flowers"; which I believe may be of special interest for those of us who were involved in the recent assembly of Christmas ornaments stuffed with just those items. Hope you enjoy this.

- Larry Liles

The Plain Garden Planting Cycle



To read the chart:

- Color-coded bars overlap the appropriate planting season for each plant.
- Bars that end in arrows indicate that these plants can continue to be sown through the season.
- Light orange bars mean these plants should be sown as seeds.
- Dark blue bars mean these plants should be planted as bulbs or tubers.
- Green bars mean these plants should be 6-inch-high transplants when put in the garden.
- Brown bars indicate that these plants should be sown in pots in a cold frame or inside the house.



GULF COAST HERB SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member? Y N

Name: _____ Phone _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email _____ (to receive our Newsletter and updates)

Committees I am interested in: _____ Herb Garden _____ Membership _____ Herb Day

Yearly dues are \$25 and payable in August.

**Please make check payable to GCHS
mail % Kathy Lovitt, 109 Grand Blvd. Mobile, AL 36607
Or bring your check or cash to one of our meetings**

Date _____ Amount \$ _____ Paid by Cash _____ or Check # _____

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Welcome to the Gulf Coast Herb Society! We meet at the Mobile Botanical Gardens from 5:30 to 7:00pm the fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise announced in our newsletter, emails and Facebook.

Refreshments are served at each meeting, it's optional to bring something to share.
Meetings start at 5:30p.m., program will follow, work days in Herb Garden TBA

QUESTIONS?

Check out our website www.gulfcoastherbsociety.org Like us on Facebook!